

REMARKS

Applicants thank the Examiner for total consideration given the present application. Claims 1-14 were pending prior to the Office Action. Claims 2, 7, 12, and 14 have been canceled and claims 1, 6, 11, and 13 have been amended through this Reply. Therefore, claims 1, 3-6, 8-11, and 13 are currently pending of which claims 1, 6, 11, and 13 are independent. Applicants respectfully request reconsideration of the rejected claims in light of the amendment and remarks presented herein, and earnestly seek timely allowance of all pending claims.

ALLOWABLE SUBJECT MATTER

Applicants appreciate that claims 2, 7, 12, and 14 are indicated to define allowable subject matter.

35 U.S.C. § 103 REJECTION – Martensson, Sasai, Tsushima, Naito

The Examiner finally rejects claims 1, 5, 6, 10, 11, and 13 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as allegedly being unpatentable over Martensson et al. (U.S. Pub. No. 2003//0219259 A1)[hereinafter "Martensson"] in view of Sasai et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6,459,519 B1)[hereinafter "Sasai"]. The Examiner also finally rejects claims 3 and 8 under 35 § 103(a) as allegedly being unpatentable over Martensson in view of Tsushima et al. (U.S. Patent No. 5,305,134)(hereinafter "Tsushima"] and claims 4 and 9 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as allegedly being unpatentable over Martensson in view of Naito et al. (U.S. Patent No. 5,228,043)[hereinafter "Naito"]. These rejections are respectively traversed for the following reason.

Applicants amended independent claims 1, 6, 11, and 13 to recite the allowable subject matter of claims 2, 7, 12, and 14, respectively. Therefore, at least for this reason, it is respectfully submitted independent claims 1, 6, 11, and 13 are allowable over the applied prior art references. Dependent claims 3-5 and 8-10 are at least allowable by virtue of their dependency on corresponding allowable independent claim.

Conclusion

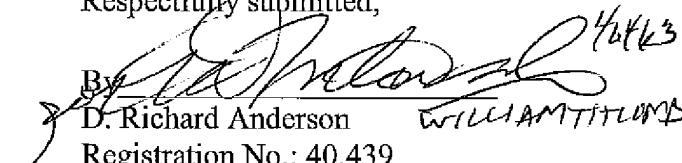
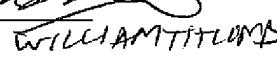
In view of the above amendment, Applicants believe the pending application is in condition for allowance.

Should there be any outstanding matters that need to be resolved in the present application, the Examiner is respectfully requested to contact Ali M. Imam Reg. No. 58,755 at the telephone number of the undersigned below, to conduct an interview in an effort to expedite prosecution in connection with the present application.

If necessary, the Commissioner is hereby authorized in this, concurrent, and future replies to charge payment or credit any overpayment to Deposit Account No. 02-2448 for any additional fees required under 37.C.F.R. §§1.16 or 1.14; particularly, extension of time fees.

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Respectfully submitted,


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